

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		
TO: <i>DDI REGISTRY</i>		
ROOM NO. <i>7E47</i>	BUILDING <i>HAS</i>	
REMARKS: <i>DCI CHRONO</i> <i>22 JUNE 84</i>		
FROM:		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION

Central Intelligence Agency

DDI- 03468/84



Washington, D.C. 20505

22 JUN 1984

The Honorable Elliott Abrams
The Assistant Secretary for Human Rights
and Humanitarian Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Elliott:

I appreciated your letter of 4 June and fully understand that Ginetta Sagan is a respected and reputable authority on human rights. I am impressed to hear of her interests and efforts in interviewing refugees and support her desire to publish on the ills of Vietnamese reeducation camps since this is a subject of interest and concern to our Government.

You might be interested in knowing that over the past several years our analytical effort on Vietnam has focused on two issues: the stability of the Communist regime in Hanoi, and Hanoi's ability to solidify control over all of Indochina. To help us analyze these questions, we have examined Vietnam's domestic problems--resistance in the south toward collectivization, economic stagnation, and the continuing activities of resistance groups, for example--and we are beginning to study likely replacements for Hanoi's aging leadership.

In doing these studies, we have peripherally touched on several of the areas of interest to Ms. Sagan. A paper we published in June 1983, for example, noted that Hanoi has used reeducation camps as one method of neutralizing resistance to government attempts to integrate the south. And in December 1983, we examined Hanoi's repression of antiregime leaders among Vietnam's ethnic and religious groups. Unfortunately, because of their classification, these studies are not releasable to Ms. Sagan.

The use of reeducation camps is only one of a number of Vietnamese policies aimed at strengthening control over the country, and we are unable to devote significant resources to

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studying this single issue. As a result, we have not collated or analyzed information on such issues as camp locations and conditions or the health and attitudes of prisoners.

Our Directorate of Operations has a program for debriefing Vietnamese refugees, primarily in Southeast Asia, as one facet of keeping up with the internal political situation in Vietnam. Information on reeducation camps, while not a specific requirement for debriefing, has been a byproduct of this program since 1975. Many of the reports containing information on the reeducation camps have been disseminated to your office as well as DIA. As you might suspect, DIA is interested in receiving the results of refugee debriefings primarily in the context of POW/MIA issue.

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Secondly, one of my officers from the Directorate of Operations will call you soon to discuss our disseminations on the reeducation camps. Perhaps some of the reports which are not too highly classified can be made available to Ms. Sagan. These suggested exchanges with Ms. Sagan should accrue to our mutual benefit.

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Yours,

/s/ William J. Casey

William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Letter to Elliott Abrams re Vietnamese
Reeducation Camps

Distribution:

Orig - Addressee

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OD/OEA

(14 June 84)

Executive Registry

04-2520

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 4, 1984

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Mr. William J. Casey
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Langley, Virginia

Dear Bill:

An incident last Thursday surrounding Ginetta Sagan, a founder of Amnesty International and a well known figure in human rights circles, prompts me to write you with two concerns: one procedural, the other with much deeper policy implications.

Unlike many of her colleagues, Ginetta is balanced. She fully accepts that the worst human rights atrocities and abuses occur in closed, Communist societies. Aware that documenting these crimes is infinitely more difficult than documenting human rights abuses in authoritarian states, Ginetta believes it is incumbent upon human rights groups to devote as much time as possible to chronicling the human rights practices of Communist states. She uses the best means available to her to perform this task - she systematically and thoroughly interviews, in painstaking manner, emigres and refugees from totalitarian regimes. Her steadfast insistence on the premises and methods of her work has given her no small amount of trouble within Amnesty International.

Ginetta has for several years been interviewing Indochinese refugees, in particular documenting conditions in Vietnamese reeducation camps from 1975 to present. She is preparing a major article on the subject for publication next Spring whose upshot will be to make the Thieu regime's renowned "tiger cages" look like bridal suites at the Ritz compared to what followed. Her findings can only benefit this Administration's foreign policy, its public diplomacy efforts, and the great struggle to which you and I are dedicated.

Ginetta called me to see whether I couldn't arrange a meeting with USG analysts to have her findings corroborated. It seems to me we might also learn a good deal from her. To my dismay, INR, after a flurry of inter-bureau phone calls, finally came up with one analyst who last paid attention to the issue several years ago. They now have a summer intern plowing through past cable traffic to try to get a sketch of the situation. According to INR at least, debriefings of Indochinese refugees have been random, incomplete, and episodic.

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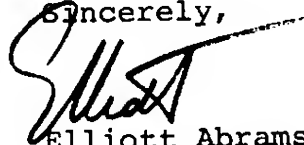
Our approach to CIA analysts (referred by INR) met with flat rejection. Despite a thorough explanation of who Ginetta Sagan was (she should have been known through her previous writings on Vietnam) and the ramifications of her work, my office was told that not only did no Vietnam analyst have any time for such a meeting, but that the CIA had almost no information on the subject!

Can this possibly be true? Is it possible that no one has done systematic debriefings of Vietnamese refugees? Have no other sources disclosed which reeducation camps remain open, which are closed, descriptions of general camp conditions, the kind of prisoners still interned, and the health, occupations, and attitudes of those prisoners released? I wouldn't necessarily expect the Agency to search out such information, but I would expect such information to have been gathered and collated through routine collection operations.

If I assume the best, my concern is mundane and procedural. The information is available, but comparing notes with Ginetta Sagan meant more work so the Division Chief just rudely brushed us off. Such obstacles are overcome, as they often are in bureaucracies, by being bucked up and generating letters like this one, irritating both of us. But if I assume the worst, i.e. what INR and CIA claim about the extent of our information on reeducation camps is in fact true, then my concerns are deeper. It means that one woman, working alone on a shoestring budget has more complete, accurate, and up-to-date information about the internal political situation in Vietnam than the combined intelligence resources of the United States Government.

Please write me, Bill, and tell me it ain't so.

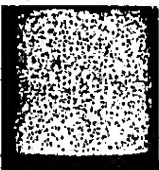
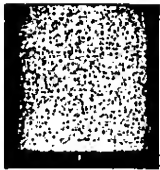
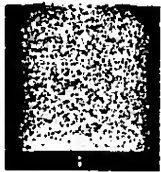
Sincerely,



Elliott Abrams

Assistant Secretary for Human Rights
and Humanitarian Affairs

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TO: <i>ODI Registry</i>		
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FROM: <i>ODDI</i>		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION

**Office of East Asian Analysis
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE**

20 June 1984

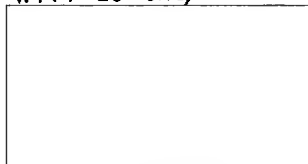
NOTE FOR: DDI

Bob,

Here is the revised version of the
letter from the DCI to Elliott Abrams.
All we have done is rewrite the last
paragraph to include the suggestion



I hope this will do the trick.



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Attachment

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14 June 1984

DDI-03468/84/1

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM:

[redacted]
Acting Director of East Asian Analysis

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SUBJECT: Elliott Abrams Letter of 4 June Re
Vietnamese Reeducation Camps

1. We have looked into the matter of Vietnamese reeducation camps raised by Elliott Abrams in his 4 June 1984 letter addressed to the Director. We believe we have been able to assimilate enough information to enable the DCI to reassure Elliott Abrams that the Intelligence Community is collecting intelligence from refugees on the internal political situation in Vietnam. We have collected some information on the reeducation camps, but we are not concentrating on them as specific intelligence targets and have not treated them as analysis issues in OEA.

2. Over the past several years, OEA's analytical effort on Vietnam has focused on two issues: the stability of the Communist regime in Hanoi, and Hanoi's ability to solidify control over all of Indochina. To help us analyze these questions, we have examined Vietnam's domestic problems-- resistance in the south toward collectivization, economic stagnation, and the continuing activities of resistance groups, for example--and we are beginning to study likely replacements for Hanoi's aging leadership.

3. In doing these studies, we have only peripherally touched on several of the areas of interest to Ms. Sagan. A paper we published in June 1983, for example, noted that Hanoi has used reeducation camps as one method of neutralizing resistance to government attempts to integrate the south. And in December 1983, we examined Hanoi's repression of antiregime leaders among Vietnam's ethnic and religious groups. This material cannot be made available to Ms. Sagan, however, because of its classification.

4. The use of reeducation camps is only one of a number of Vietnamese policies aimed at strengthening control over the country, and we are unable to devote significant resources to studying this single issue. As a result, we have not collated or

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analyzed information on such issues as camp locations and conditions or the health and attitudes of prisoners.

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5. We also discussed this subject with [redacted] the DDO. They maintain that intelligence on reeducation camps in Vietnam is not a major collection requirement for the DDO. However, it is acquired from time to time as a byproduct of several refugee debriefing programs conducted in the field. Some 30-40 reports on the subject have been disseminated since 1975. The major customers for this information are DIA and the Human Rights people at State--presumably Elliott Abrams' own office. According to [redacted] there are few formal intelligence collection requirements for the refugee camps as such; DIA, for example, is interested primarily in the context of POW/MIA matters. There is little intelligence interest in refugees who have escaped from these camps since they have in a sense been in isolation, and thus have not had access to the type of intelligence on Vietnam the DDO is attempting to acquire. [redacted] suggests we might consider releasing the intelligence reports on the refugee camps to Ginetta Sagan since most of them are classified at the [redacted] level.

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6. It seems to us the best solution is to have someone from [redacted] contact Elliott Abrams to work out a way to best service Ms. Sagan's requirements.

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7. The suggested draft of a letter from the DCI responding to Elliott Abrams' letter is attached.

8. Also attached is the exchange of correspondence on Leo Cherne's memo on human rights violations in Vietnam. You will note Ginetta Sagan's name appears prominently in this material.

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Attachments:
as stated.

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